

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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NESCO

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TAGS: UNESCO, PORG

SUBJECT: SECOND GENEVA GROUP MEETING ON UNESCO BUDGET

REF: PARIS 26582

1. IN SPITE OF GENEVA GROUP MEMBERS' UNANIMOUS BELIEF THAT UNESCO'S BUDGET IS MUCH TOO EXPENSIVE AND SHOULD BE PARED, SEPTEMBER 17TH MEETING EXPOSED SUCH WIDE GAPS IN WHAT MEMBER GOVERNMENTS WERE WILLING TO ACCEPT AS CUTS IN RETURN FOR THEIR VOTE, THAT A UNIFIED FRONT FOR PRESENTATION AT 100TH EXBD NOW APPEARS WELL BEYOND REACH.

2. REPRESENTATIVES OF SWEDEN, HOLLAND, AND THE UK SAID THEY WOULD PROBABLY RECEIVE INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTE FOR BUDGET AS IT NOW STANDS, AND THE BELGIAN AMBASSADOR SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT VOTE AGAINST. ON THE OTHER HAND, CANADA'S REPRESENTATIVE REVEALED THAT SHE HAD INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTE AGAINST THE BUDGET UNLESS IT WERE REDUCED TO 190-205 MILLION DOLLAR RANGE. THE REPRESENTATIVES OF FRG, ITALY, AND JAPAN REPORTED THAT THEIR GOVERNMENTS WOULD ALSO BE VERY LIKELY TO VOTE AGAINST THE BUDGET UNLESS CUTS MUCH MORE SUBSTANTIAL THAN THOSE CONTEMPLATED BY THE GENEVA GROUP ITSELF WERE

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AGREED.

3. EVEN GIVEN THESE WIDELY DIVERGENT POSITIONS, A RATHER WEAK CONSENSUS EMERGED NONETHELESS THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO APPROACH DG M'BOW WITH THE GENEVA GROUP'S RECOMMENDATION THAT THE BUDGET BE CUT BY ABOUT 3 MILLION DOLLARS. THE BELGIAN AMBASSADOR EMPHASIZED THAT SUCH A DEMARCHE, ALTHOUGH REPRESENTING ONLY A PIDDLING FRACTION OF THE TOTAL BUDGET AND STILL REQUIRING SOME EXPENDITURE OF POLITICAL CAPITAL TO BOOT, WOULD BE A SYMBOLIC FIRST GESTURE BY GENEVA GROUP MEMBERS THAT UNESCO'S REAL PROGRAM GROWTH MUST GO NO FARTHER. ITALY'S AMBASSADOR CARDUCCI ADDED THAT IN THE EVENT SYMBOLIC CUTS WERE OBTAINED, IT MIGHT PROVIDE GOVERNMENTS WHO WITHOUT A CUT WOULD VOTE AGAINST THE BUDGET THE POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY TO ABSTAIN, OR EVEN TO VOTE FOR THE BUDGET.

4. FRG'S AMBASSADOR PETERSEN AGREED THAT THE SECRETARIAT'S DEMONSTRATION OF BUDGETARY MODERATION THROUGH WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT SOME CUTS MIGHT GIVE HIM A LITTLE LEVERAGE IN PRYING AN ABSTENTION FROM HIS GOVERNMENT. NONETHELESS, HE SAID HE WOULD HEED HIS GOVERNMENT'S GUIDANCE BEFORE SPECULATING ANY FURTHER WHAT MIGHT BE ITS REACTION TO AND PARTICIPATING IN A DEMARCHE TO THE DG.

5. AS OTHER GROUP MEMBERS ALSO NOTED THEY WOULD NEED GUIDANCE BEFORE BEING ABLE TO SUBSCRIBE TO A GENEVA GROUP DEMARCHE ON DG M'BOW, ANOTHER MEETING WAS SET FOR SEPTEMBER 23. US PERM REP, GG CHAIRMAN, POINTED OUT THAT A DECISION WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE AT THAT TIME SINCE THE BUDGET APPEARS ON EXBD AGENDA FOR SEPT 29. HE ALSO ASKED GROUP MEMBERS TO BE AWARE THAT DRAFT RESOLUTION ADDITIONS SINCE BUDGET WENT TO PRESS WILL ADD ABOUT \$2.9 MILLION TO TOTAL BUDGET PROPOSAL.

6. ALTHOUGH US CONTINUING TO PLAY LOW KEY ROLE ON BUDGET, AS CHAIRMAN OF GG, US ABLE EXERT PRESSURE TO GET GG MEMBERS TO PRESS FOR ECONOMIES. WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO UNLESS INSTRUCTED OTHERWISE.

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